



## **PRESIDENT**

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## **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

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## **SECRETARY TREASURER**

**Al Renz**

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**Club meets**

**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays**

**At 11:45 am**

**Check Website for**

**location**

**hsvoptimists.org**

# Opti - Topics

## **Opening**

We met at the 88 Buffet today, and as usual, I ate too much. Parking anywhere near the entrance to the buffet was again nonexistent. President Al said he arrived at 10 minutes to 11:00, and it was a problem even then.

We had two guests today. One is a prospective member, Ken Kemmerer, guest of Jim Roe. Ken is a retired engineer with Whirlpool Corp., and moved to Harvest recently to be near his son and not too far from his daughter. We also had Matt Clarke, son of Bill Clarke, as our guest. Jim said he believes Ken is ready to become a part of the “Harvest Mafia.”

President Al Adams, asked Rev. Jim Berry to open the meeting in prayer, and Al led the Club in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance despite having no flag.

## **Announcements**

Gay Pepper announced the next **two trial meeting places** her committee had selected for the Club: Next week, April 2, the Club will venture into Madison and meet at the **Sunny Street Café** for a trial lunch.



On April 9, it is planned to meet at **Oh Bryans Family Steak House** “a ways out” on Highway 72 East. It must be tough finding an acceptable place in our traditional central Huntsville meeting location.

**Our business meeting  
is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Thursday of the  
month at the Optimist  
Recreation Center on  
Oakwood Avenue**

## **DIRECTORS**

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## **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

**Clyde Nevins**

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President Al reported that he and Tom Casteel had attended an **Optimist Leadership Summit** in Nashville last Saturday. Al said the meeting was very informative, and worthy of much better attendance from our Club at future opportunities. One valuable side benefit was interacting with many of the Optimist Club leaders in the new Alabama-Mississippi District.

Club President Al Adams introduced our speaker for today, Carlton J. Wright, Band Director at Alabama A & M University. Al said he is also known as “Professor Wright” by some of his friends and associates. Mr. Wright is a native of Montgomery, AL, and was previously band director in some Alabama high schools. Mr. Wright has a BS in Music Education from Alabama A & M (1986) and Masters in Music from Hampton University. He is married and has three Children.

Al announced that Mr. Wright brought a flute that was formerly used by his daughter to donate to our club’s Band Instrument Program.

Mr. Wright opened his talk by thanking the Club for inviting him, and said he was well aware that several of the band directors in our Band Instrument Program graduated from Alabama A & M. He said this program is a wonderful thing for Huntsville and Madison County.

Mr. Wright next gave a brief history of the Alabama A & M band program. The first band director at the university was W. C. Handy (1900-1902) who went on to become famous for his blues music. Also noteworthy was band director James Wilson who taught for 50 years at the university.

Changing the recruiting practices of the university has been a primary goal of Mr. Wright. He is emphasizing local recruiting, as opposed to recruiting out of state. When he took over the program in 2013, about 85% of the university’s band hailed from the Atlanta, GA, area.

He noted that this has a great impact on the use of scholarship money since it costs 2 or 3 times as much to fund an out-of-state student scholarship than it does for a local scholarship. A further benefit to recruiting locally is that it will help boost the attendance at football games at Louis Crews Stadium since parents will attend to see their offspring play and march at halftime.

Mr. Wright spoke next on the importance of the band in developing good character in a young person. He cited how being in a band develops punctuality, productivity, teamwork and respect for others. He said learning to respect others was the biggest thing of all. There's always a way to solve problems and disagreements if a cool head and slow tongue are employed to arrive at an acceptable resolution for everyone.

### **Question and Answer Session**

- Q.** Alberto Duarte asked about the number of students in the Alabama A & M band.
- A.** Mr. Wright said that when he arrived in 2013 there were only 135 students in the band, and by season's end the number had dwindled to 120. In his second year, he has now been able to increase the number to 204.
- Q.** Alberto Duarte asked on what basis the band scholarships were awarded.
- A.** Mr. Wright said that scholarship dollar amounts vary depending upon the skill level of the applicants. All applicants for scholarships must demonstrate ability to play in 12 major scales, 2 minor scales, sight read music, and play a prepared solo piece.
- Q.** Clyde Nevins asked if there was interaction by him and the local band directors, especially those who graduated from A & M and who are participating in our Band Instrument Program.
- A.** Mr. Wright said that he's learned that the middle school level is the best level for generating interest in music and for recruiting future band students. He makes it a practice to visit the schools, often playing trumpet with them.

**Q.** Jim Berry asked about the make-up of instruments in the A & M band.

**A.** Mr. Wright gave the following breakdown:

- Flutes: 16
- Clarinets: 20
- Saxophones: 16 to 18
- Trumpets: 26
- French Horns: 6
- Trombones: 25
- Baritones: 13 or 14
- Tubas: 16 to 20
- Percussion Instruments: 24 to 28
- Flag Carriers: 18 to 20
- Dancing Girls: 10

**Q.** Vastell Williams asked if hazing new band students is a problem at A & M.

**A.** Mr. Wright said hazing is against the law in Alabama, and he is totally against it. He made eliminating hazing a priority when he took over the band, and when he began as band director had a long discussion with the president of the university on this very subject. Subsequently, he has these measures against hazing in his program:

- Every band student must fill out a notarized anti-hazing agreement before being accepted into the band.
- At his band camps he has the university's attorney, the campus Chief of Police and a representative of the Huntsville Police Department speak to band students about the consequences, at every level, if they are caught hazing.

## **Closing**

President Al Adams gave our speaker a tile with the Optimist Creed on it, and asked him to draw for the attendance prize. Duane Plank won on the first drawing.

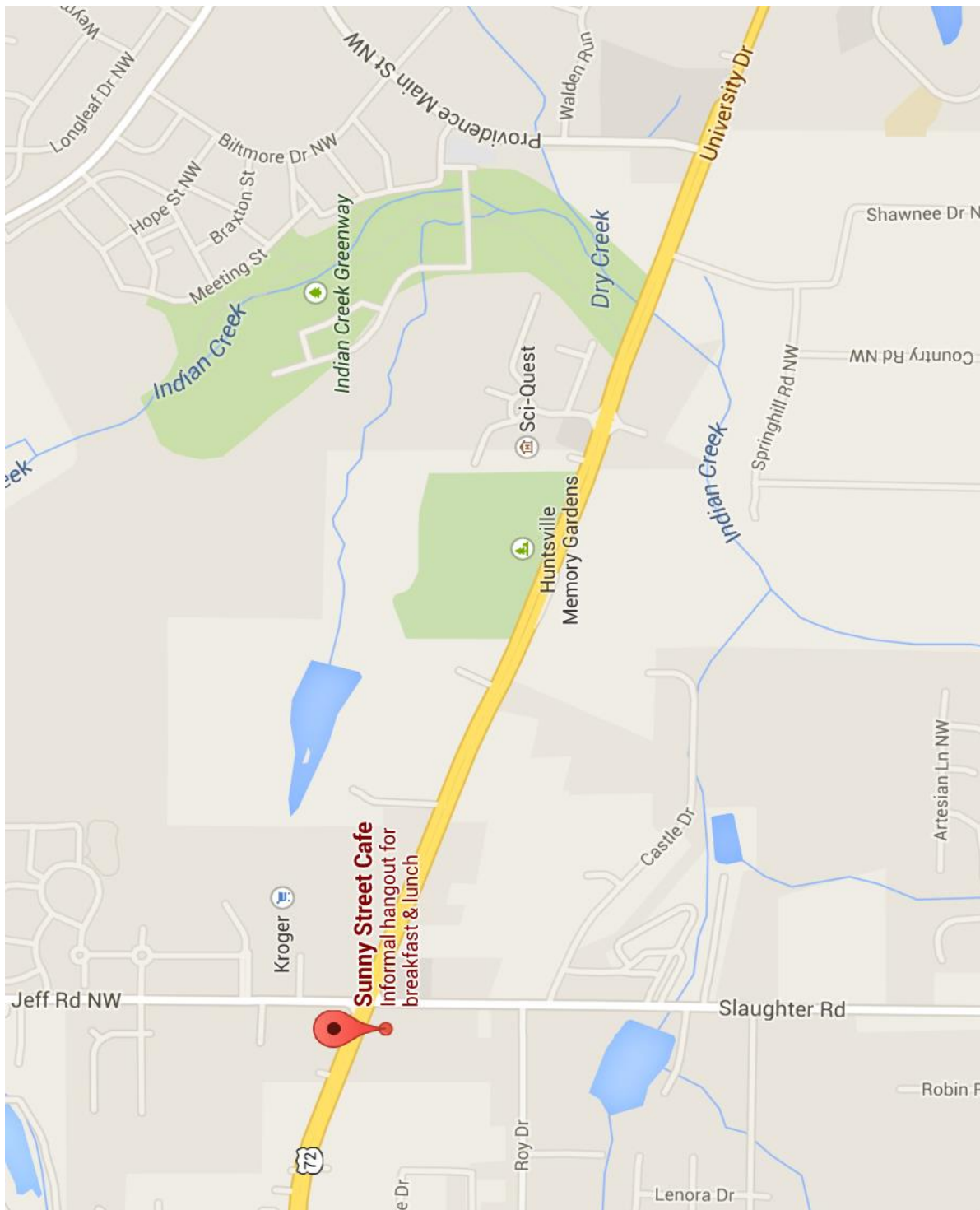
In the absence of Dr. Carl Winkler, Tom Casteel led us in the reciting the Optimist Creed to close the meeting.

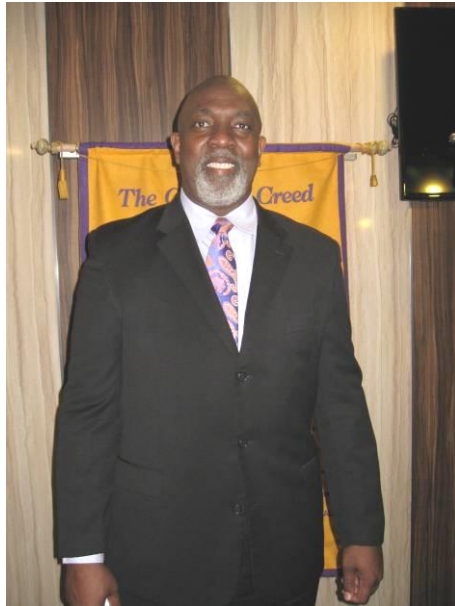
*Clyde Nevins*

## Optimistic Quote of the Week

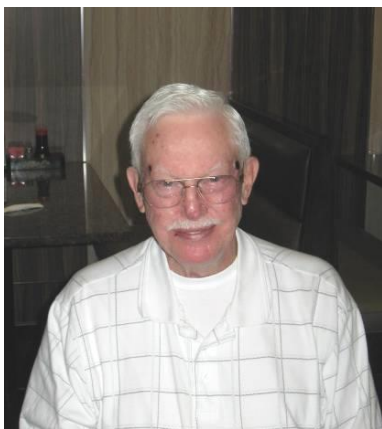
**"Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything."**

*~ Plato*





**Our speaker, Professor Carlton J. Wright**



**Ken Kemmerer, guest of Jim Roe**



**Matt Clarke, guest of Bill Clarke**



**Vastell Williams in his Spring Break shirt**

## CALENDAR

- 4/2 Thursday 11:45 am **Sunny Street Café**  
**Al Renz – Boy Scouts**
- 4/6 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank  
**Board Meeting**
- 4/9 Thursday 11:45 am **Bryans Family Steak House**  
**TBD – Alberto Duarte**
- 4/16 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food – (Alberto Duarte)**
- 4/23 Thursday 11:45 am TBD  
**Tiffany Martin – Director – Hawthorne Conservatory**
- 4/30 Thursday 11:45 am **NO MEETING**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Thursday**
- 5/4 Tuesday 6:30 pm Respect for Law Banquet  
**Mayfair Church of Christ (Gymnasium)**
- 5/5 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank  
**Board Meeting**
- 5/7 Thursday **NO MEETING**  
**Respect for Law Banquet replaces this meeting**

## THE OPTIMIST CREED

Promise Yourself -

**T**o be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

**T**o talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

**T**o make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

**T**o look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true

**T**o think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.

**T**o be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

**T**o forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

**T**o wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

**T**o give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

**T**o be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Optimist International



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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

**TO:**